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Opening music]

>> [voice over]: Our project focuses on apples in Appalachia, with a specific focus on heirloom varieties in the South and apple pie. Apples grow well in the climate and soil of much of the Appalachian region, and there are still many orchards in North Carolina that not only grow apples but who also focus on saving and growing heirloom varieties. There are many ways that apples are used in Appalachia, from eating straight from the tree, to cooking or baking, making into apple butter, using for cider or apple moonshine called "applejack", and preserving by drying or with sulphur. In our focus on pies, we scanned the Appalachian section of Special Collections to find recipes, several of which we picked out to make ourselves.

Apples are not native to the United States, but have grown well here since being introduced in the early 1600's. Trees grown from apple seeds will produce genetically different and unique fruit, and therefore with the spread of seedlings many new varieties were developed. By 1872, nearly 1,100 different American varieties were documented. The peak of domestic apple growing was between 1900 - 1910. After this time, apple production and diversity dropped at a staggering rate. By 1980, it was estimated nearly 86 percent of diversity was lost, a rate loss of 75 heritage varieties per year. It is difficult to gather comprehensive information, but some research states upwards of 16,000 varieties have been grown on American soil. Now, a single variety, the Red Delicious, dominates 41 percent of the American apple crop. It is one of 11 varieties that are most commonly seen on grocery store shelves.

Apples are obviously an extremely common food, but they possibly wouldn't be as well known as such an American symbol if it weren't for one man by the name of John Chapman - or as he's more commonly referred to - Johnny Appleseed. Although he's remembered in the form of a fun tall tale to tell children, John Chapman was a real man who walked around the country planting apple seeds. He planted orchards and let them grow for years before returning to sell off the land at higher prices, rather than doing it for the love of apples as schoolchildren are lead to believe. The fact that he liked to do everything on foot secured him a spot as a rugged pioneer in the eyes of the American public.

The original apple pies in America were not the same as the apple pies we see on the Fourth of July - in fact they had more differences than they had similarities! As Mark McWilliams references in his book, *The Story behind the Dish: Classic American Foods*, early recipes in America for pie were not nearly as sweet as they now are, for sugar was an expensive and hard to acquire ingredient at the time. The crust was used for a completely different purpose as well, for English immigrants at the time used what they referred to as "coffins" - a pastry often made with lard and flour - that were solely meant to be a vessel for the filling to bake in, since the coffin itself was often tough and leathery. In her article "As Chinese, Iranian and Indonesian As Apple Pie," Foodways writer Simran Sethi writes about how although these early Americans were all of different ancestry, they fused their cultures and melded their recipes,

taking the best parts of each - the filling from the English, the flaky latticed crust from the Germans and the Dutch - to make the apple pies we know of today.

Within a strictly Appalachian context, the love of apple pies looks to have started with the making of fried hand pies by using the apples that had been dried at the end of the previous year's apple season. There doesn't seem to be an exact distinction as to when the fresh apple pie became a staple in the Appalachian diet, but Osment posits that it likely spanned out of the sheer amounts of apples that were being grown in the area, as they have been a core baked good found in orchards' stores for years.

Slow Food USA, a group promoting preservation of genetic diversity and heirloom crops, created the Renewing America's Food Traditions, or RAFT alliance. In 2010 RAFT published the manual on apples, with a valuable compilation of historical information. The conditions in Appalachia are highly suited to growing apples. North Carolina ranks seventh in apple production in the nation, with other Appalachian states being high on the list. The South is also high in genetic diversity and number of heirloom varieties. This is due in part to the efforts of individual growers who have spent lots of their time and energy trying to collect, save, document and grow any heirloom varieties they can find. One such person is Creighton Lee Calhoun of the Piedmont region. Calhoun spent over 15 years collecting heirloom apple varieties, then researching their origins to create his book *Old Southern Apples*, an anthology like no other. Calhoun once grew over 450 Southern varieties in his own orchard. Several years ago, he donated most of his orchard to the Southern Heritage Apple Orchard, which is part of Horne Creek Living Historical Farm in Pinnacle, NC, and also to his apprentice David Vernon of Century Farm Orchard in Reidsville, North Carolina. Both contain some of the most genetically diverse orchards in the region. Uncommon apples in Appalachia are a growing industry, as Timothy Osment writes in his essay, "Apples." Western North Carolina itself is a hotbed of apple activity, with more than 10,000 acres of orchards producing over 75,000 tons of apples each year.

In an essay in *Cornbread Nation 3*, cookbook author Frank Browning describes his experience growing up on an orchard in eastern Kentucky. Buying apples was a community and family tradition, and many would come to his family's farm on Sundays after church to spend leisurely hours choosing their apples. However, Browning also describes how growing apples set his family apart from their community, not only because of their association with the neighbors who were prominent moonshine producers (and sometimes used their apples to make applejack), but also because apples carried an underlying air of mystery and temptation. Despite the bountiful number of orchards strewn across Appalachia and the rest of the country, at least in Brownings' community, apples still held some mark of being the 'forbidden fruit'. As Browning describes in his cookbook *An Apple Harvest: Recipes and Orchard Lore*, apples are "the preeminent fruit of temptation" and, for many cultures "the consummate symbol. . .of love, and even of immortality".

Apple pie is not merely a deliciously sweet and flaky dessert - it has become a symbol of American ideals, but most people don't really know why.

It all started with an editorial in the New York Times in 1902 when they used the line "Pie is the food of the heroic. No pie-eating people can ever be permanently vanquished" and the American public ate it up - no pun intended. Throughout the next few decades, the ideas of apple pie and America seemed to become synonymous, and by the time World War II rolled around the phrase "American as apple pie" was a common saying. In fact, throughout World War II, it was common for U.S. Army men when asked what they were fighting for, to reply "for mom and apple pie". After the end of the second World War, America became distrusting of the USSR, and Jack Holden and Frances Kay released a song called "The Fiery Bear" in which they sing: "We love our baseball and apple pie / We love our county fair / We'll keep Old Glory waving high / There's no place here for a bear."

Of the 200 or so Appalachian cookbooks in the Pamela C. Allison Collection, we found approximately 65 that contained recipes for apple pie. These recipes fell into four general categories: basic or traditional pie recipes, "mock" apple pie, the "brown bag" method of cooking pies, and mostly similar recipes that had special additions like cheese or other toppings. The general apple pie recipe includes sliced apples, cornstarch or flour, spices like cinnamon or nutmeg, sugar, and butter. Some recipes have variations in ingredients including brown sugar, eggs, or different toppings. There were also a few variations in cooking techniques - such as one recipe that advised the apples be cut and soaked in saltwater before mixing with sugar and other ingredients. One major cooking method that distinguished a set of recipes is the "brown bag" method. Just like it sounds, these recipes generally follow the normal ingredients and preparation as the traditional pie recipes but call for the pie to be cooked inside a brown bag in the oven. The recipes for "Mock" apple pie are not actually made with apples, but generally with Ritz crackers. This type of mock pie developed out of necessity, for people who didn't have access to fresh apples, or out of a kind of novelty surrounding Ritz crackers.

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